2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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158 828 man tells them 'Go there', and then the victim goes; perhaps he says 'Run', and then he runs where he is told. Some say that smoke comes out of the ground, rises, and goes to the bush, and that they run to the bush where the smoke ended. They say that the smoke rises from the ground and goes with great speed to the place at which it comes to an end.

And those who run mad say: 'When you fellows catch hold of me and I overcome you though you are many, it is not that I fight alone by myself with my own strength, but there are four men with me who help me. And when you tie me up they help me to loose the rope.'

MWAIKAMBO: A boy of my own age ran mad; when he recovered he told us some of what he had seen in his madness (*mumbepo syake sya kigili*). He said he had seen lots of black cows, all entering the ground, going one by one into a hole; and that he had thereupon become unconscious and run wildly about.

A Christian told me that he had a relative (a non-Christian) who ran mad and who constantly told them how the fit started in him. He said that it was when he saw in the spirit (*mumbepo syake*) a very old person wearing ragged clothes, then he ran mad. The Christian who old me this added that he thought himself that perhaps it was Satan that his kinsman saw.

● [261] Those who run mad eat filthy things—mud, cowdung, human faeces, all kinds of frogs and so on. When you ask them about this they say they do not know what they are doing. And they often run about naked.

MWASANILA AND MWALIPOSA (two old men).

Madness takes two forms: one comes from Kyala, one from the ritual. When a man has the madness from Kyala his actions are filthy. He eats filthy things without discrimination, he loses his own sense of humanity and the sense of his friends' humanity also, he loses the sense of his own actions. This is one way of telling that a man has the madness from Kyala. Another way is this: they catch the madman and go to a doctor to treat him with medicines; well, when the doctor gives him the emetic the patient vomits butterflies. When they have made him vomit and given him another medicine too he either recovers altogether or perhaps he goes mad again later. But even if he recovers, his body is different from that of other men, and when he is angry his heart seems to be full of madness again. The madness of Kyala is the most serious.

The madness of ritual is the less serious kind; people who have it do not act in a filthy way. Their madness is like a passionate anger (*ilyojo*), that is all. When you catch such a man and take him to a doctor for the emetic we find no butterflies in the vomit. Again, if he has taken the medicine and recovered, his body is perfectly healthy and it seems as

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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protective powers of the drug are securely transferred to his own stock.

A man who does not hoe is held in supreme contempt, but he does not starve. His neighbours give him food, seizing the opportunity to add much sound advice. But lazy men are held in suspicion, for it is highly probable that they will become garden thieves.

When there is reason to anticipate a general scarcity of food, the spirits are invited to confirm or dissipate fears. The chief orders a collection of *malesi* (millet) to be made, each village headman bringing the contribution of his people in a small basket. One headman is selected whose wife makes the beer, the behaviour of which indicates the spirit's answer to the question put. The beer is poured into a large calabash, and thence into two cups, which are placed at the *masyeto* (graves of the dead chiefs). There they are left for the night, and if in the morning the beer is found to have risen in the cups, filling them to the top, the harvest will be good; otherwise it will be bad. If the signs are good, all care is cast away, beer is made in great quantities, and drinking and feasting take the place of the previous anxiety. But when the spirits foretell a bad harvest the utmost economy is practised, and the chief is bound to see that no one makes prodigal use of his resources.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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CHAPTER IX

Eating & Drinking

000 WHEN the white man travels he has a number of men who carry his pots and pans, his plates and spoons, and all the paraphernalia of his travelling kitchen. His two dozen or so Konde carriers are well provided for if they have a couple of pots between them, or a piece of tin, usually a flattened-out food tin, on which to roast their maize as they squat chattering round the evening fire. What the white man wants with all that he gives them to carry, they do not know, and are not always interested. I was once seated in a remote village having breakfast, and a very simple breakfast at that; but I heard one of the villagers, numbers of whom were looking on from a distance, ask my boy, "How do you know what to give him next?" What the boy replied I did not hear, but the interest in his operations was great.

261 The carriers take no food for themselves. It is their business to look after the white man; it is his to look after them; and I have always found that if he takes reasonable care to see that they are well fed and bestowed, they will not stint themselves in service to him. If nothing else is obtainable, they will be

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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content with maize roasted on a piece of tin, or a few potatoes roasted in the fire. I have known them, too, going perforce for a long time and quite uncomplainingly, without salt, or any kind of relish for their food. For all these drawbacks are fully compensated for when the white man kills game; then they gorge; then the astonishing capacity of the native to take in food is seen at its best, or worst. A friend of mine once, far up in the mountains, killed an eland, and, leaving his men to deal with the carcase, went to his camp. His men kindled a fire at the ndkill, a sat down to feast; when they returned to camp in the early hours of the morning, one man was missing, and his dead body was found where he fell, killed by his own immense greed, aided by a heavy rain which set in during the night.

But while feeding arrangements "on safari" are primitive in the extreme, the ordinary household arrangements are by no means so. The housewife operates with a great variety of pots, baskets, calabashes, and some women are celebrated cooks. A possibly mythical story of olden times tells how two chiefs went to war for the possession of a great woman, who was the wife of one of them, and was widely distinguished for wisdom and sagacity, and for her unusual culinary skill. She was secured by the attacking chief, and lived with him quite happily as his chief wife; an unusual honour, for it is a rule that captured wives never attain to that distinction.

The Konde, like most Bantu peoples, are noisy

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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driving out all the sorcerers, no one would die of smallpox, but one remaining sorcerer could work unlimited mischief so long as he remained undiscovered.

In a community which practises "subsistence agriculture," it is important to know beforehand when the rains will be late, and it is the duty of the prophets to let the chief know, and through him the people, when this will happen. In such a contingency, the chief issues instructions, varying in minuteness, regulating the kinds of food which are to be used, and warning against greed. Punishment used to follow disregard of the prohibition, but the chiefs, although they still issue orders as before, do not now venture to punish offenders, or at any rate they punish none who would be likely to report them to the Administration.

Famine, however, was not always the result of drought. It was often, in the past, the result of war. When a powerful enemy approached, the people left the villages and took refuge in the bush, sometimes for long periods, leaving all that they could not carry to fall into the hands of the invader. The last occasion on which such a famine was foretold was when the Angoni passed through the land seeking a habitation. The people fled before them, and a famine resulted which is still traditionally remembered. With such a powerful enemy approaching, the prophets had an easy task in foreseeing famine.

The death of chiefs is also foretold. The prophets see in dreams the house of a chief being built in the

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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"Why with cassava?" I asked "Because the husband thinks of cassava as a security against famine; if a famine comes he takes his *busongo* cassava and gives some to each of his wives."

"And why with bananas?" "Because if he has bananas of his own then when the chief sends the great-commoner round to collect bananas for guests, or to send to the hospital in Tukuyu, the man cuts one of his bananas. He realizes that, as he has two wives, if he takes a banana bunch from one of them she will be angry and wonder why he cut her bunch and not that of her fellow wife."

"So it is only polygynists who keep separate *busongo* bananas?" "Certainly, no monogamist would ever do so."

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"A man named Mwaisaka," he told me later, "once disputed with his wife over the selling of maize. They had just begun harvesting the crop when the woman told her husband that she intended to take some of the maize to the shops and sell it and buy some cloths; for her child was naked and she had neither cloth nor skin to carry him in on her back, she had to hold him in her arms. Mwaisaka, however, told her to wait a little until all the maize was harvested, when he would divide it up. His wife thereupon protested that the crop was their joint property and that he himself could take some for sale whenever he wished, so why not she also; and she pointed out that many other people had already begun to sell their maize and buy cloths. So they quarrelled and Mwaisaka struck his wife, who then ran complaining to the great-commoner. The great-commoner heard the case and judged that Mwaisaka was in the wrong because his wife had no skin for carrying her baby and was in trouble therefore. If, he said, she had not been in such trouble over carrying the child they would have given their opinion against her for refusing to agree with her husband's proposal to wait and finish harvesting first, but as it was they thought that Mwaisaka was in the wrong; no division of plots or crop had been made and the food was their common property. And Mwaisaka admitted that he was wrong." "Did he pay his wife any compensation for the blow?" I asked. "No, they reconciled them to one another."

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"And if a man," I enquired further, "takes some of the food which belongs to himself and his wife jointly and sells it without telling her, will she make a case against him?" "She may, but if she is a gentle wife she argues it out alone with her husband; she asks him why he did not consult her, for there is now but little left and she wonders what they will eat. And her husband, if he is a sensible man, agrees with her and admits that he was in fault. But if, instead, the man makes out that he had every right to take it, for the food is as much his as hers, and if he is indignant at her protest then that attitude will bring a quarrel between them."